



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Chief Operating Officer

September 12, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As educators, your child's safety is our first priority. That's why we're writing to update you about lead water testing at our schools.

As you may remember, the Department of General Services (DGS) conducted water testing in all DC Public School buildings at the end of the 2015-2016 school year. All water sources were tested, and families were notified of the results. The vast majority of the tests were found to be negative. If a water source was found to have an elevated level of lead, the water source was taken out of circulation and DGS worked to fix the issue, which included installing a filter or replacing equipment. The water source was not put back into circulation until a follow-up test was done and the filter was shown to be successful. The results of this follow-up test were also communicated to families. You can find the results of your school's test here: <http://dgs.dc.gov/page/water-sampling-results-dc-public-schools>.

For the 2016-2017 school year, **filters have been placed on all drinking water sources**, including all water fountains, all sinks in health suites, and all sinks in kitchens where food is prepared. For sinks that are connected to fountains, we are in the process of placing filters on the sink side of the device. Filters are already installed on the fountain side.

Not all water sources in schools are designated as drinking water sources. Sinks in bathrooms or in classrooms are safe for hand washing, but should not be used for drinking water. **Non-drinking water sources are labeled as such so that students do not drink water from them.**

In July, the DC City Council introduced legislation on water testing in schools and child-serving facilities which would impact the frequency and volume of testing; that legislation is currently under Council review. In the meantime, DGS is planning for this school year's water testing. When the testing plan is final, we will communicate that plan to families.

You can learn more about the national standards for water safety at schools on the EPA's website: <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-drinking-water-schools-and-child-care-facilities>. Additionally, the Washington Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) provides many services to District residents: <https://www.dcwater.com/lead/LetterToCustomers.cfm>.

The health and safety of your child is paramount to us, just as it is to you. If you are concerned about your child's health, we recommend you contact your pediatrician. If you have additional questions, please call (202) 442-5559 or email [SchoolLeadQuestions@dc.gov](mailto:SchoolLeadQuestions@dc.gov). Thank you for your continued support.

Carla Watson  
Chief Operating Officer